COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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" There hath been, within the compass of a few years, much talk, and God knows, too many ill effects " too, of Factions in this kingdom; and we have lived, in our days, to see the two great Parties, of late " known by the names of WHIG and TORY, directly change the ground; and those, who were formerly " the Anti-Courtiers, become as pliant and obsequious, as ever they were who had been the most found " fault with on that score. But, we are humbly of opinion, that, at this time of day, neither of those " Parties have the game in their hands, as they have formerly perhaps fancied to themselves. But they " who shall be so honest, and so wise, constantly to prefer the true Interest of England to that of any " other country or people, preserve the Religion and the Laws, and thriftily and providently administer " the public Treasure; that Body, whomsoever it shall be composed of, shall have the Weight of England " on its side; and if there can be any of another frame, they must, in the end, prove so many ROTTEN " REEDS."——Preface to Lord Clarendon's History, p. ix.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

CONTINENTAL WAR.—The war upon the Continent, in which England has now no more real interest, than she has in the wars of Tartary or Hindostan, affords abundant matter for newspaper and coffee-house speculation; and the " victories" of General Beningsen seem to have gone almost to the producing of illuminations in London. Yet, for the life of me, I can discover no victories that he has gained, except upon the principle of Ralpho, that, " when the fight be- " comes a chace, he wins the day that wins " the race." We are told by the Courier newspaper, and, indeed, by all its fellow labourers, that the recent *Message* of Napoleon to the Senate, accompanied with *a project of a law*, is a proof that his army is wasted, and that he entertains great apprehensions even for his personal safety. In speaking of the Senate the Courier gives way to an expression of indignant feeling truly worthy of an English writer: " That *wil-* " *ling instrument of tyranny*," says he, " the *Senate*, has been convoked, and a " Message from Buonaparté laid before " them, with the report of the minister of " war;" and he adds, " that the necessity " of passing the law was urged by the *ora-* " *tors of government*," whereupon the thing was done, of course, without even any sham debating about it. I was so forcibly struck with this passage of the Courier, that I had half a mind to take it for a motto to this sheet; and, after all, if I have preferred my Lord Clarendon, it has been merely for my respect for antiquity. Nothing in the world, that ever was yet thought of; nothing that could be invented by the most wicked of men; nothing that any one who had sworn incessant and implacable enmity to the human race; nothing that the devil himself could invent, ever was, or ever could be, a more efficient instrument in the hands of a tyrant, than a senate corrupted to the core, no matter by what means, assuming the forms of deliberation, but having, in fact, no free voice, and being, in reality, the mere tools of the ruler, made use of by him for the base purpose of causing the people to believe that there is some check upon his authority. What! " *a Project of a Sena-* " *tus Consultum!*" That is to say, of an *Act* or *Law;* and this sent, ready cut and dry, by the ruler in chief to the senate! The senate thereupon pass it, without, perhaps, the ceremony of putting it to the vote, and of extracting a half-articulated *aye* from a dozen or two of the drowsy hirelings present! This they call a proof of their liberty, do they? This they call deliberation, and the passing of laws? And yet, if I mistake not, these same law-givers were assembled in consequence of what they termed *an election!* Insulting mockery! To call such a set of vile instruments, bribed by the executive power, no matter by what means, the representatives of the people! A sheer, undisguised despotism is not half so bad, not half so galling, as this mockery of legislation and representation. Why not issue the " Se- " natus Consultum," or decree, or act, or law, or whatever the accursed thing ought to be called, from the closet of the ruler at once? Why send it to be cried *aye* to by a set of fellows, who, as all the world knows, *must* cry *aye* to it, be it what it may? Oh! there is a very good reason for it. The sending of it through this corrupted channel causes the attention of the people to be distracted; it confuses them as to the origin of it; their resentment is enfeebled in seeking for the proper object; some of the most foolish of them are amused by the despicable ceremony; while the innumerable swarm of dependents of the ruler and of the gang of

plünderers, by whom he is surrounded, preach up the necessity of obedience to *the law*. In short, a degraded and corrupted senate seems to be the only means, by which a nation can be completely enslaved, and rendered contented, or, at least, perfectly passive under its slavery. —— But, though I agree with the writer in the Courier thus far; though I am but too well convinced of the truly diabolical tendency of such a senate, I am far from being convinced, that the Message of Napoleon is a satisfactory proof, or, indeed, any proof at all, that Napoleon finds himself in embarrassed circumstances; for, have we not, within the last seven years, seen the conscription anticipated several times? And, have we not constantly seen, that the French have called forth their troops in the hour of victory with even more activity than in the hour of defeat?——I have bestowed common attention, at least, upon the accounts from Poland; and I cannot perceive any ground for supposing, that Napoleon will not effect the objects, which he has always evidently had in view, namely, the annihilation of the military power of Prussia, the independence of Poland, the shutting of Russia out of the South of Europe. I may be deceived; but, I wish not to *deceive myself*; and, therefore, until I see some solid reason for hoping, that Russia will be able to make head against him, I shall be very careful to abstain from encouraging such a hope, in any of those readers, who may think my opinion worth attending to.——To form an estimate of Napoleon's "alarms," as the Courier calls them, we have only to observe, that the ground of one of them is, *England's* extraordinary levy of *two hundred thousand men*, not one of whom has, after almost a year's talking about it, yet made his appearance at the drilling place; and, the utmost that this "extraordinary levy" is intended to do, is, to learn as much of the art of war as it is possible to learn, under the joint command and instruction of serjeants and constables, in the space of about three or four hours in a day, for twenty four days in the year, that is to say, about fifty or sixty hours all together. Napoleon must know all this full as well, if not rather better, than our king's ministers know it; and, therefore, I leave the reader to guess how real his "alarms" are, seeing that this "extraordinary levy" is the subject of one of them.——The truth is, that the language of the Message of the Emperor and King is exactly the language that has been held by him in all his communications to his senate, and which communications are intended much more for the purpose of producing effect in Germany and in England than in France. They *amuse*; and that is the chief object. They draw off men's attention from his great designs of conquest. We see, that this present Message has had that effect with us. The newspapers are exulting at his embarrassments; they are anticipating his reverses and his final overthrow, instead of keeping the mind of the nation steadily fixed upon his design of conquering us, and upon the means of preventing his success. They have, any time these six months, been telling us, that the Germans were ready to rise upon the French and cut their throats, the moment they should be defeated by the Russians, and compelled to retreat. I never believed a word of this; and my sincere opinion is, that there is not a state in Germany, where the French were not welcome guests, and where, such is the feeling of the people (a most *perverse* feeling, no doubt), that they would rather be under the French than under their former rulers. We have been constantly told of insurrections against the French; and we have never yet seen one real insurrection against them. With false accounts and false prophecies we shall be amused to the last; to the very hour, I fear, that the enemy will land upon our shores. ——An instance of this propensity to fabricate falsehoods to deceive us, relative to these matters, we have recently witnessed in the history of "the bombardment of "Constantinople," and "*the treaty*" resulting from it. Whence could that falsehood have proceeded? With whom could it have originated? Its source, doubtless, was, the sanguine imaginations of those, who conduct our newspapers, who first deceive themselves, and then deceive us. The mischief that this deception, this system of deception, I may call it, does in the country, is not to be described. When the famous lie about the grand defeat of the French was circulated, some time back, the commanders of volunteer corps, with a degree of discretion truly characteristic of them, called out their troops, in many places, and announced to them the glorious event. The particular object in doing this it is not very easy to guess at, unless, indeed, the representing of their enemy as destroyed was regarded as likely to insure their future zealous attention to their duty; but, we may be pretty certain, that the representation has never been contradicted; so that these "defenders of the country" have, ever since that time, slept sound in the confident hope, that it wanted no defence.——The

writers of the newspapers are continually talking about the "salvation of Europe." The partizans of the late ministry tell us, that the Whigs, being engaged in the "salvation of Europe," had no time to think of their former pledges to England; while the partizans of the present ministry affirm, that their predecessors did nothing at all for "the salvation of Europe;" but, none of them ever tell us *what they mean* by "the "salvation of Europe." If we were to guess at their meaning, however, we might suppose it to be, that by overthrowing Napoleon, and by placing the Continent in the same state in which it was previous to the year 1790, Europe would be *saved*. Saved *from what?* What would it be saved from? That is the question. Why John Bowles and his associate Redhead would answer, that it would be saved from *Jacobinism*. But, then, again, *what is* Jacobinism? Is it despotism? Is it a loss of liberty and property and personal safety? The trade of Anti-Jacobinism has been a thriving one with John Bowles and Redhead; but what has the nation got by it? Napoleon, however, is no Jacobin and Leveller. He has a senate as subservient as even John Bowles could wish; and though he is not quite mean enough to have recourse to sham deliberations amongst his senators, no one can accuse him of suffering the people to have any more weight in the government than the crows and magpies have. Why, then, should John Bowles dislike him, who talks as eloquently and as sincerely about "regu-"lar government, social order, and our "holy religion" as John himself? It is, to superficial observers, the strangest thing in the world to hear John Bowles railing against *the Emperor and King*, whose sacred person we might, on the contrary, expect him to revere. Aye, as Emperor and King; as despot; as the ruler of a venal and subservient senate; as the grinder of a passive people; as the stifler of the press; as the ear-clipper, the transporter, or the hanger of every man who dares to promulgate political truths; as all these John likes him well enough; but, John has, thanks to Pitt, a snug little revenue out of the taxes of England, and, if the Emperor and King were to conquer all Europe, he might afterwards conquer England, in which case John might (though I see no reason for it) lose that revenue. My opinion is, and always has been, that, if Napoleon were to conquer England, which I trust, the sense and courage of the independent part of the nation will always prevent, the favourites of the conqueror would be those who now most ravenously prey upon the people. But, these are a prudent race. They always prefer a certainty to an uncertainty; and, therefore, it is perfectly natural, that they should be so anxious for "the salvation of Europe," which, being fairly interpreted, means the salvation of their own emoluments. They have no feeling in common with the mass of the people; their minds take a totally different turn; and though we, too, may pray for the lessening of Napoleon's power, our motive must be different from theirs, or it is worth but very little indeed.——"The salvation of Europe," to be worthy of our solicitude, must embrace something more than the mere object of transferring the people of the several states back to their former masters; and, unless we are satisfied, that the re-transfer would be productive of happiness to those people, we should be very careful how we pray for it. Perhaps John Bowles may be able to give us satisfaction upon this head; but, until he, or some one of his worthy coadjutors think proper to indulge us so far, we shall act wisely in restraining our anxiety for the salvation of Europe, and confine it to the salvation of England, the means of insuring which have not, I am afraid, engaged much of John Bowles's attention, except, indeed, in the case of his pamphlet against the thinness of petticoats, handkerchiefs, and stomachers, or rather, against the total absence of these latter articles of female attire. John's morality is sound and good; and, though not very forcibly urged, has nothing objectionable in it. But, Mr. Bowles, it is strange, that, in observing so justly upon the flagrant vices of the times, you should never, even by accident, have stumbled upon the *cause* of them. It is strange, that, when you saw a flood of vice breaking through the ancient dams of the constitution, you should have gone, with your thimble-like pail, to lade it out of the distant rivulets. You complain of the execrable scenes in the metropolis; you complain of the luxury, the prodigality, the debasing effeminacy, the insulting disregard of all decency in the displaying of these to the world; but, while you do this, you stigmatize, as Jacobins and Levellers, as sworn enemies to "regular government, social order, and our holy religion," all those who wish to see a change in that system, by which forty millions a year of the earnings of the people are collected, and distributed into hands, through which they naturally pass to the metropolis, and where they as naturally produce all the vices of which you complain. Some of your

fellow-placemen, or place-hunters, who do not happen to be taken with a pious turn, call them, not *vices*, but the marks of a "*highly polished state of society*;" and, it must be confessed, that, if the regular increase of pauperism amongst the many, and of splendour amongst the few, be such marks, we are, in point of *polish*, the envy of the world.——Leaving to your sagacity to find an application of this to the subject of the continental war, and hoping that it may lead you to view the probable events of that war with an eye more philosophical than you have hitherto surveyed them with, I shall now proceed to matters more immediately interesting to us."

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.——Since my last observations upon these proceedings, some uncommonly hard debates have taken place in both Houses.——On Monday, the 13th instant, a motion was made, in the House of Lords, by Lord Stafford, similar to the motion of Mr. Brand, in the House of Commons, when, upon a division, there appeared for the motion, 90, and 171 against it, leaving the late ministry still further behind than before.——On Thursday, the 16th instant, MR. LITTLETON made, in the House of Commons, a motion in the following words: "That this House, consi-" dering a firm and efficient administration " as essentially necessary at the present " crisis, feels the deepest regret at the late " change in his Majesty's Councils."—— Upon a division, there appeared 198 for the motion, and 244 against it; and thus the late ministers were left in a still decreasing minority, though Mr. Littleton failed not to remind the House, that of those acts of the late ministers, which he now called upon the House to approve in a lump, the House had, almost unanimously before approved of in detail. But, this honourable gentleman does not appear to have considered, that, the House having already approved of them was the very best of all reasons for their looking upon it as unnecessary to approve of them again; for, as to the trifling circumstance of the ministers being *before in place* and *now out of place*, that could, of course, have no weight at all. Mr. Littleton dwelt much upon the publication of the famous minute of Council, which he is reported to have said, "had been committed to *venal jour-*" *nalists* by perjured councillors;" and, though I shall say nothing upon the latter point, I am, I must confess, glad to hear it acknowledged in parliament, that there are such persons as "venal journalists."—— MR. WARD (not Robert) made a speech, from which I must insert an extract, as it contains most valuable matter. He said, that " he regretted the late change in his majes-" ty's counsels, as we thereby lost a wise, a " patriotic, and an efficient government, " and because it was replaced by one directly " the reverse in almost every point. The " merits of the late ministers had already " been stated in detail, but he would just " remind the house of the steps that had " been taken with respect to the public ex-" penditure, of the plan of finance that had " been brought forward, and of the abuses " that had been corrected, at the expense " of diminishing their patronage. This plan " had produced the most sensible effects, it " had *diminished the confidence of the ene-*" *my*, and raised that of the country; it had " *saved us from new taxes for some years.* " He was not saying that it would do so in " the hands of the present ministers; and " by *that means alone, they had done more* " *than any one act of any administration* " *whatever, to keep up the spirits of the* " *people*, and secure the confidence of our " friends abroad. In the hands of the pre-" sent ministers indeed it might fail of its " object. Millions might be wasted for the " purpose of rousing unwilling cabinets to " arms. English gold, or in other words, " *English labour, and English misery*, would " be applied to bring about another battle " of Austerlitz, *which our bulletin manu-*" *facturers might again convert into splendid* " *victories*, and he hoped that the manufac-" turer would be brought up from the Ad-" miralty Court to the Foreign Office by a " special retainer for the purpose. So many " plans of finance had been proposed by the " friends of the Chancellor of the Exche-" quer, that he, with great prudence, per-" haps, had taken none of them. The late " ministers were anxious to reduce the ex-" penditure at the expense of their power— " they set their faces against abuses, and " they were too sparing of the public money " not to experience *the enmity of all rob-*" *bers, and the whole of the vermin that* " *lived on the public plunder.* These *wretches* " were in the utmost terrors when they " observed the diligence of the late minis-" ters in their inquiries, and their ardour in " detecting and punishing delinquents. But " the change had relieved them from all " their fears—they now raised their heads " and rejoiced—*the good old times were re-*" *turned.* The golden age was come again, " and the present ministers were sensible of " the advantage which they had, in this re-" spect, over their rivals, and they were de-" termined to make use of it. With what " satisfaction must this description of per-

" sons look to the restoration of a noble lord " to the situation of a privy councillor, " whose defence, standing in this house " (though it was a confession rather than a " defence) was, that he had expended ten " thousand pounds of the public money, of " which he would render no account to the " constitutional guardians of the public " purse? What a glorious set-off was this " to the Committee of Finance and others, " which the gentlemen on the other side, if " he might judge from the smile on their " faces, would perhaps say were ap- " pointed *for the sake of patronage!* " What a glorious set-off was it against " these committees which had brought " abuses and defaulters to light, and, " *he hoped* to punishment, and which were " in the way of doing a great deal more " good of the same nature! What a satis- " faction must this be to those who acted in " this affair in opposition to the people, and " to the dignity of the house of commons! " and how gratifying must his restoration " be to those who advised his majesty to " admit him again to his councils, with " the resolutions of the 8th of April still " on the journals of the house! The pre- " sent administration, with few exceptions, " consisted of those who had attempted to " screen the person alluded to from censure " and punishment; and now, therefore, the " fear of rigid inquiry was past."——This was, as far as I have quoted it, an excellent speech; but, the whig partizans must give them up, or fall into inconsistencies. Mr. Ward, in the former part of his speech, attempted an apology for *withdrawing the bill*; and he talked about *better times*, when resigning at once would have been preferable. His words, as given in the report, were these: " In better times (he did not " allude to the Brentford mob, the Corres- " ponding Society, or any thing of that " kind; but to the sense of all the people " who were not mere creatures of the " court) in better times it would have been " considered as more proper for the minis- " ters to have retired when they were com- " pelled to abandon the Catholic Bill, and " not to have waited for the last disgrace " which was preparing for them. If they " had done that he would have stood by " them. But, *perhaps*, there was *some- " thing in the times*, prejudices raised by " the French Revolution, which, by a *re- " action*, prevented the progress of real re- " ligion and toleration, by operating on " men's fears, which would have rendered " this an imprudent step. This was the " consideration, he was well assured, that " weighed with the late ministers, and *not " the desire of continuing in office.*"—— What had the " *Brentford mob*" to do with this? They said nothing about Catholic emancipation. And, as to the language of Sir Francis Burdett, it has always been precisely that of Mr. Ward in the above extract. Mr. Ward talks of the exportation of English gold, or, " in other words, Eng- " lish *labour*;" Mr. Ward says, that the only true way of raising the spirits and securing the confidence of the people, is to diminish the taxes that press upon them; Mr. Ward talks of " *robbers* and *vermin* " who live on the *public plunder*," and says; " these *wretches* were in the utmost terrors " at the prospect of an examination into " their delinquencies." Has not Sir Francis Burdett always said precisely the same? And have we not always seen him assailed by " *these wretches*?" Why, then, should Mr. Ward call *his* hearers *a mob*? Mob as they were Mr. Ward never saw them applauding Sir Francis to-day, and hissing him to-morrow. Mob as they were they did not shift from side to side like the winds in April. If, indeed, for the sake of base lucre, they had turned their backs to-day upon the very man and the very principles that they had cheered but yesterday, then Mr Ward might justly have denominated them a mob, and a vile mob too, however small or however large their numbers, in whatever vestments clad, or called by whatever names.——As to the allusions to Lord Melville, they might have passed without any observation from me; but, Mr. Ward chose, in the latter part of his speech, to follow the example of Lord Howick and his colleagues, and to *eulogize Pitt*, who lent, not *ten* thousand, but *forty* thousand pounds of that very same money (for the misapplying of which Lord Melville was impeached) to Boyd and Benfield, two members of the then parliament, without interest, though the public paid them interest for that money. This he did without the consent of parliament; without the knowledge of his colleagues; without making any minute of the transaction; and, when the fact was *detected* by the Commissioners, the late ministers, then in the opposition, moved a *bill of indemnity* for him, at the very moment that they were impeaching Lord Melville; and when Pitt died, they joined most heartily in a vote to make the people pay his debts " *upon the score of his " MERITS!*" Let Mr. Ward find a justification for this; let Mr. Ward tell us why he eulogizes Pitt; and we then may join him, perhaps, in what he says against those who have advised the re-introduction of Lord

Melville into the Council; but, not until then will a man of us join him; and, though he seems not to think that this is the sentiment of *the people*, he may be assured, that it is the sentiment of every really independant man in England.——Mr. HAWKINS BROWN followed Mr. Ward, who in one part of his speech had drawn a ludicrous picture of the calling of Mr. Perceval from the bar to preside at the board of finance, to which Mr. Brown most triumphantly replied by observing, "that that *great and illustrious man*, "*Mr. Pitt* (the very words made use of by Mr. Ward) "quitted the study of the law for "the study of finance, and that, surely, the "same might be done by Mr. Perceval, who "had the further advantage of having al-"ways been in habits of intimacy with that "great man." He might have added, too, that Lord Grenville quitted the study of the law for that of finance; and, indeed, this is miserable cavilling against Mr. Perceval, who, if he had been a country-gentleman, would have been twitted of quitting the plough for the seals of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. It is the *place*, with its attendant power and emolument; it is the being in this place when others wish to be in it, that constitutes, in their eyes, the whole of the incongruity. Why not, as Mr. Hawkins Brown asked, why not be Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as Pitt? He can make speeches if not quite so loud, full as long and as good as those of Pitt; he can make loans as well; he can bring in bills as well; he has the same office, the same power, the same patronage; as to majorities, he has a greater at this time than Pitt had when he first came into office; and, if he wants a greater still, he has the example of "that illustrious "statesman" before his eyes, which example, in this respect at least, he will, doubtless, follow.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT——My readers will do me the justice to remember, that, at the first dawn of the late change, I foresaw, that His Majesty would again, with his usual paternal goodness, be graciously pleased to give his people an opportunity of re-choosing, or of rejecting their representatives; and this, if I am rightly informed, he will do about the middle of next month. Of my sentiments upon this subject the reader is already in possession; and so unequivocal are the advantages of an election, to the people at least, that I should suppose there are very few persons, unconnected with the late ministry, who must not rejoice at the prospect. To choose our representatives is amongst the most precious of our rights. It is our great franchise; and, can there be a voter in the whole kingdom, who objects to have an occasion to exercise it? Can the exercise of it come too often? Yet, for expressing a sentiment of this sort, I have been most cruelly treated by Mr. Perry, who calls me a Jacobin and Leveller, because I wish to see the people exercise this inestimable right as often as may be. The Whigs, the great clamourers for a reform of parliament, proposed, amongst other things, to *shorten the duration* of parliaments, and some of them, amongst whom was Mr. Tierney, went so far as to propose *annual* parliaments; yet, if the newspapers speak truth, as probably they may in their reports of debates, the Whigs now consider the mention, on the part of Mr. Canning, of an appeal to the people, as a terrifying threat. One would think, to hear their outcries, that he had threatened to blow them all up with gunpowder, after the manner of Guy Fawkes; and, it is particularly to be observed, that Mr. Tierney is represented as being one of the loudest in this outcry, and as having said, that, though the prerogative of dissolving is undoubted, yet that the House of Commons has a right to be informed of, or to inquire into, the causes of it. Now, mark the consistency of this doctrine, according to which the king is to appeal to the House upon the question of changing his ministers, which ministers, observe, make part of the House, but he is not to appeal to the people, that is to say, to the choosers of the House. These are pretty decent principles for parliamentary reformers! But, it is Mr. Perry, the great Whig champion, and, only the other day, the staunch friend of "regular government, social order, and "our holy religion;" it is this gentleman, whose language is most worthy of notice, and, I must say it, of reprobation. It will be remembered, that amongst the sentiments and opinions that I lately quoted from him, were those of profound respect for, and implicit confidence in, the present House of Commons, who, as he positively asserted, had been chosen as fairly as any House of Commons ever had been, since parliaments had existed in England, and who, as he also asserted, would not fail to support the late ministers against the new ones. Now, supposing the former assertion to have been true, it follows, of course, that parliaments never were fairly chosen since their existence, or, that the late parliament was fairly chosen. If the former, then what becomes of the doctrine of Blackstone and Paley, and what becomes, too, of the profound respect of Mr. Perry?

If the latter, which was evidently his meaning, then the present House of Commons are the real representatives of the people; and, as that House contains a majority against the late ministers, the conclusion is, that the people, truly so called, prefer the present ministers to the late ministers. But, it was in the latter assertion, the assertion that the House would support the late ministers; it was here that Mr. Perry was deceived; and this may, I hope, teach him to qualify his assertions. He should have said: "the present House was as fairly "chosen as any house that ever existed, "*if they continue to support the men who* "*have given me a place.*" A qualification of this kind, expressed, perhaps, with a little more refinement in point of taste, would have spared him that disappointment and mortification, which are now but too visible in his writings, and which, it grieves one to perceive, has driven him to speak with no common degree of irreverence against that very House of Commons, whom he had before so eulogized. His words, in his paper of the 22nd inst. are as follow:— "The report of the dissolution of parlia- "ment daily gains strength; and it was "said yesterday that the dissolution will "take place about the end of May. We "are not sorry to see *those men who voted* "*with the new ministers, merely to secure* "*their precarious seats, thus sacrificed.* As "to the propriety of the dissolution, every "man is capable of forming an opinion. The "object is to secure, if possible, a majority "in the House of Commons, upon which "the new ministers can rely. Notwith- "standing all their boasts on the late majo- "rities, they are sensible they do not "possess the confidence of the House of "Commons. They must therefore endea- "vour to *fit the House of Commons to their* "*mind,* and supply their want of reputation "and of public esteem, by the *lowest and* "*most hacknied arts of the Treasury.*" ——What Mr. Perry may mean by *fitting the next House of Commons to their mind,* by the *lowest and most hacknied arts of the Treasury,* we must be content to guess, until he shall be pleased to explain himself; but, he tells us plainly (though, doubtless, rashly,) that there were men in the present House of Commons, "*who voted with the new ministers merely to secure their precarious seats;*" and observe these men belong to that House, which he assured us was chosen with perfect fairness! This, too, is the man, let it be remembered, who, but only the other day, professed unshaken attachment to "regular "government, social order, and our holy re- "ligion;" and who earnestly and even vehemently deprecated a dissolution of parliament, least it should afford to those (and me amongst others,) whom he called "the "agitators of Middlesex and Westminster," an "immoderate *licence of debate,*" a "jubilee suspension of authority!" —— My Lord Howick and others are said to have professed, that *they do not intend to set up a harrassing opposition*; how far this corresponds with the hope, which Mr. Perry tells us was expressed by his lordship, in the lobby, that Mr. Brand's motion would be *followed up with others of a similar tendency*, I need not attempt to point out; but, this profession of moderation certainly comes a little of the latest, and, like other Whig professions, will now pass for exactly what it is worth. It would really seem, that the Whigs, like Sir Sampson in the play, having found that force was unavailing have had recourse to wheedling; but, they have old birds to deal with, and old birds are not easily caught with chaff.

Botley, 23*d. April,* 1807.

TEST ACTS.

SIR,——The obnoxious bill lately introduced into the House of Commons, and which caused the removal of the late administration, has given rise to many observations relative to the Test Act, and the petition of the University of Oxford, and, I believe that of Cambridge, expressly request that there should be no repeal or relaxation of the Test Act, which those learned gentlemen state to be essential for the security of our constitution in church and state. It may not, therefore, be improper to state, through the medium of your Register, how the law now stands, and what operation this famous act has upon persons holding commissions in the army and navy, and how far it is effective in excluding Roman Catholics from either.——The Test Act is well known to have been enacted in 1672, the 25th of Charles II. Not many years after, it was found that many persons who held offices under government had not qualified under this act; their services therefore must have been dispensed with, and they must have lost their places, unless some method was devised to screen them from the disabilities and penalties of the statute; accordingly, in the year 1700, an act was passed, indemnifying from all penalties such persons holding places as had refused or neglected to take the test, and allowing them a farther time to do it. In the following year a similar bill passed, allowing all defaulters to continue so until the month of August, 1703. Soon af-

ter two bills passed, the first allowing three months, and the second six months to persons appointed to offices before they are required to take the test. Since this time these acts of indemnity frequently passed, and for the last 50 or 60 years not one session of parliament passes, without the law being enacted to indemnify all past defaulters, and to appoint a period within which they may comply with this essential duty. Before that period arrives care is taken to pass a similar law, so that any person may hold an office or commission during his whole life, and never conform to the test act.——Now, Mr. Cobbett, permit me to ask you or any of your readers, how, as long as this annual act of indemnity passes, the Test Act can be said to be any security to the constitution either in church or state. If the admission of Roman Catholics into the army and navy be, as the Oxford doctors assure us it is, dangerous to the state, what impediment is there to the King filling the army with Roman Catholic officers, and trusting his fleets to admirals of that religion? Under these acts of indemnity the King may appoint a Roman Catholic commander-in-chief, and he would hold his situation in spite of all the penalties of the Test Act. Permit me, then, Mr. Cobbett to express a wish that our learned Universities in their zeal for the welfare of the constitution, will petition against this annual indemnity bill, which effectually undermines this bulwark of the state, and makes this great effort of human wisdom, the Test Act, a mere dead letter. The other clause of this unfortunate bill which has caused so much real or pretended alarm, allows to Roman Catholics and Dissenters who enlist in the army and navy, the practice of their respective religions, as far as it is consistent with their military duty, and exempts them from attending the service of the church of England. Now, Sir, if I am not much misinformed, many Roman Catholics have taken commissions in the army, and a great number of the same persuasion have enlisted as common soldiers and sailors; but when any individual of the former has arisen to a certain rank in the army, his promotion has been stopped under the plea of the Test Act, although the act of indemnity would screen him; and the person who is promoted in his stead, no more conforms to the test than he would. Here, Sir, let me remark, that it is equally required to conform to the test to be an ensign, as to be a general. That such a plea as I have mentioned is not necessary for the purpose I confess, and we have a strong instance of the promotion of an officer being stopped without assigning any reason, in the case of Col. Cochrane Johnstone.—To be consistent, either no commissions should be given to the Catholics, or they should be allowed their promotion; and liberty of conscience should be given to the privates, or serjeants should be forbidden to enlist either Catholic or Dissenter. As things now stand, the officer may say with truth you accept my services in subaltern situations, but you refuse me that reward of those services which you grant to all other subjects, though your Test Act is not more violated in one case than in the other, and the men who are enlisted may say, we are willing to spill our blood for you, and in return you torment our consciences. ——I am, Sir, &c.——T. I.

CATHOLIC QUESTION.

Sir,——A Political Register is evidently so unfit a vehicle for polemical disquisition, that, if I could possibly suspect you were inattentive to the preservation of that celebrity which you have justly acquired by your publications, I should imagine that certain passages in some of the essays lately inserted had wholly escaped your notice. The justice and policy of admitting Catholics and Dissenters to the full exercise of the birthright privileges of Englishmen, or the converse of this proposition, are questions which properly come under the consideration of the politician and the philosopher: but the conformity of the doctrines of any church or any assembly of Christians with reason or scripture, is by no means a fit subject of discussion in public life, or in popular assemblies, wherein the judgment is so frequently warped or perverted by prejudice, or the influence of worldly passions. These reflexions are naturally suggested by the following passage in the letter signed Simplicius, which is so extraordinary from its illiberality that it cannot be passed over without a remark. "It is not indeed, easy "to suppose," says he, "that a mind capa- "ble of giving serious credence to the doc- "trines of transubstantiation and the trinity, "the infallibility of the pope and auricular "confession, could be any great acquisition "to a society of sensible mechanics, and "certainly much less to a cabinet council "or a British House of Commons." The author of this very extraordinary assertion is, as he stiles himself, *a rational dissenter*, that is, a professor of Christianity so far as Christianity is comprehensible by the powers of the human intellect: he consequently subtracts from his creed every thing which is intricate and mysterious, every thing which cannot be reconciled with the general order of Providence, as observed in the moral go-

vernment of the world. Peace be to such men, if it be really true, as Simplicius asserts, that "the peaceable principles of their "sect are become in a manner proverbial:" but let it not be forgotten, that the rational Dissenters of France, who, like the brethren of Simplicius, had been "all their lives "loudly protesting against wars and perse-"cutions," were no sooner possessed of power than they displayed all the malignity of character, which, during their humiliation, had lurked under an exterior of moderation, and had vented itself occasionally only in contemptuous expressions. The priests and professors of Christianity were then no longer exposed merely to insults and terms of reproach: their persons were branded with infamy, their profession was reviled; they were swept from the face of the earth like poisonous reptiles, their churches, their sacred vessels, their vestments, and their scriptures were polluted to the vilest purposes; while the rational Dissenters elevated a prostitute on a pedestal, decorated her with the title of Reason, their favourite deity, and bowed their knees, from spontaneous impulse, before a viler object than Pagan Rome had ever been compelled to celebrate with divine honours. Simplicius belongs to a sect so insignificant in the number of its adherents, that it no more breaks the uniformity of the Christian world, than a grain of dust destroys the sphericity of the artificial globe: yet this man has so contracted the circle of his philanthropy, as to refuse to all dissentients from his received opinions the perfect enjoyment of their mental faculties. The belief in the Trinity is, and has been, professed by every established church in Christendom since the first propagation of the Christian doctrines; and now, by one undistinguishing sentence, all the worthies in modern history, all who have distinguished themselves in science, in literature, in governing kingdoms, or in conducting war, are pronounced inferior to a society of sensible mechanics. Simplicius dates his letter from Aberdeen. Now, I can readily suppose, that a man of common understanding, living in an obscure town in a remote province, who by dint of greater application has overstepped the ordinary qualifications of his neighbours, may, in their eyes, appear a kind of prodigy from his vast acquirements, and may himself, from listening to repeated adulation in his college, his chapel, his corporation, or his club, become so convinced of his superiority, that, finding within the sphere of his own acquaintance nothing equal to himself, he may at last, give way to the foolish illusion, that he rightly appropriates to himself the appellation of a rational dissenter from the general opinions of mankind. But let Simplicius step from his pedestal, let him shake off the dust of Aberdeen, let him breath the air of the capital, let him mix with society in Edinburgh, let him extend his peregrinations to London, let him pass over to the continent, and on his return to the society of the mechanics of Aberdeen, let him solemnly prononnce, if he conscientiously can, that a believer in the Trinity cannot communicate to them any portion of useful knowledge. Hitherto I have considered the assertions of Simplicius only so far as they regard Christianity in general; but as you had formerly given insertion to my imperfect essays, I again request your permission to call the attention of your readers to the consideration of his arguments, as directed against the doctrines of the Catholic church, to which I profess a peculiar attachment. "One cannot help thinking," says this rational dissenter, "that those enlightened "individuals who are found in the commu-"nion of the Romish church, do not really "believe the absurdities which custom and "education have taught them to hold sa-"cred:" which absurdities he pronounces to be the doctrines of transubstantiation and the Trinity, the infallibility of the Pope and auricular confession. After the volumes which have been written on the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, to the conviction perhaps of those only who were already preconvinced, it would be truly ridiculous if Simplicius and myself were now to take up the gauntlet, and exhibit in the *arena* of your Political Register, the trite but inexhaustible train of arguments, which have been repeatedly advanced on opposite sides of this great question. I feel the doctrine to be in no danger from his attack, and shall not stretch out my feeble arm to support its majestic fabric. Besides, the doctrine of the Trinity is incorporated with the religion of the state, and in England, as in the rest of Europe, it needs no champion.—Another doctrine, equal to the last (according to Simplicius) in absurdity, and peculiar to the Romish church, is transubstantiation, or the reality of the divine presence in the Eucharist. I do allow that to men whom custom and education have not taught to hold this doctrine sacred, the belief of it does appear to present inexplicable difficulties: and yet we do believe it in sincerity of heart, because the church has so interpreted, what the Scripture has so revealed. The rational dissenter may deride us for our easy faith; but the Christian of any of the re-

formed churches who rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation, will with difficulty be able to justify his retaining the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For if the elements used in the administration of it be really and simply bread and wine, can bread and wine impart relief to the afflicted *soul?* Is it not a mockery to load the stomach of the expiring penitent with common food, in order to prepare him for his passage to eternity? Was the ancient custom of placing a piece of money in the hands of the deceased more irrational? If the use of the Sacrament be retained merely in commemoration of our Saviour's death, by what *antiperistasis* do bread and wine, the means of supporting animal life, bring into our minds a livelier recollection of this awful event? I do not attempt to explain, nor will I even undertake the defence of, our faith in this instance: but to me it appears a necessary conclusion, that unless I believe that the words of Jesus to his Apostles, "this is my "body and this is my blood," were understood by them, not as a rhetorical flourish, but as a sacred, though a mysterious, truth, the Sacrament of the Eucharist itself is nugatory and inefficacious. Let men of the reformed churches pull out the mote from their own eye, let them explain why they hem round with all the terrors of religion the simple action of eating and drinking, why they declare that he who approches the holy table unworthily eats and drinks his own damnation, if this eating and drinking be in no respect different from our daily use of food for the sustenance of our earthly bodies. The Baptists argue against the practice of infant baptism from the precept delivered to the disciples, "go and "teach all nations, baptising them," &c. because say they, we are commanded to teach before we baptise, and consequently the persons admissable to baptism must be previously capable of receiving instruction. And do we speak more irrationally when we maintain, that our Lord would not have delivered his commandment to his disciples in an unintelligible manner concerning a practice which it is essentially necessary to their salvation to perform worthily. I apologize to you and your readers for having spoken on doctrinal points. To the government of our country and to our fellow subjects we hold ourselves bound to discuss and explain the doctrines of our church, only so far as they affect the moral conduct of its professors. And by what perversion of logic can it be shewn that a belief in transubstantiation tends to deprave our hearts, to vitiate our conduct, or to weaken our sense of moral and civil obligations?—Auricular confession neither contains any absurdity in itself, nor is it, nor indeed can it be, injurous in its practice to the state, to society, or to individuals. The church of England, as may be seen in the visitation of the sick, has retained auricular confession, and acknowledges the validity of absolution pronounced by the priest. And if its custom be disused, it only shews that the church of England, an innovation in Christianity, can enforce its precepts by no authority. it points out what is right to be observed, but can only *recommend* the observance of it. I in vain endeavour to comprehend by what reasoning auricular confession and the other tenets of our church can be represented as "a moral delinquency "of so vast an extent, that all the sufferings "of the Catholics" (which Simplicius himself, allows to be great) "do not afford an "atonement by any means commensurate." Voltaire, by no means a favourer of Catholicism, speaks of confession, in more than one instance, as the means of preventing erroneous or sinful conduct. I, who know its effects as well as Simplicius, acknowledge it to be a powerful check upon irregular conduct; and I will beg leave to mention an observation which I have made on comparing the general manners of England with those of Catholic countries, that the scandalous licenciousness of unmarried women in our country, which is without a parallel in the whole world, is attributable chiefly to the circumstance of girls being so much exposed to the solicitations of young men, while at the same time they are unprotected from their seductions, and unapprized of their own danger, by a counsellor in whom they have been taught to confide, and to whose admonitions they have learned to listen with respect and reverence. "In "fact," says Simplicius "a free pardon "may be obtained for any crime, how "great soever may be its magnitude, by "which an augmentation of the power or the "wealth of the See of Rome is acquired." This is indeed a proof of Simplicius's docility to the instructions which he recieved from the *gude wife* who taught him his catechism in the nursery; but boys in general, when they are removed from under the care of their nurses, dismiss such lessons from their minds, and reject them as absurd prejudices. The absolution which the Catholic priest pronounces is no encouragement to licenciousness: it is declared to be efficacious only if repentance is sincere, and is no more in fact than what every Protestant pronounces to his own heart. The mind which is stored with precepts of morality may perhaps per-

s'st in virtuous conduct without extraneous support; but the uncultivated mind of innocence can in no institution of human society find greater assistance, than by being invited and enjoined to make a timely confession of the first inclination to irregularity, and to listen with themselves to the prudent admonitions of a devout and virtuous ecclesiastic. I have known in many instances that virtuous resolutions have been strengthened, that vicious propensities have been corrected, by the advice of a confessor; and I think in general it must be admitted, that all, except the abandoned and hardened sinner, will hesitate to commit a fault which they must reveal, but which they are sensible they cannot reveal, even to their confessor, without being covered with confusion. The infallibility of the Pope is a doctrine which Catholics have never held. Simplicius knows our religion only from our calumniators, accordingly, he says, " an host " of ecclesiastics are prepared to abjure the " Pope;" but, on the contrary, we affirm, that no temporal advantages shall induce us to abjure one tittle of that perfect body of faith which has been delivered down to us by our forefathers. We glory in the name of papist, we believe it to be impossible that the whole church, against which Christ has declared that the gates of hell shall not prevail, can fail, or be deceived, in any one point of faith; and though we believe that the visible head of Christ's church is assisted with a particular helping grace with respect to his office and functions, for the benefit of the whole flock, *yet we do not believe, nor has the church ever declared, him to be infallible, much less impeccable.*—Where then is our moral delinquency? Where our mental inferiority? Why are we taxed with duplicity, when it is evident, that if the charge was founded, we should not hesitate to subscribe to the terms on which we should be permitted to exercise public employment? No instance can be produced of a Catholic, continuing in the communion of the church, conforming to the conditions prescribed to those who hold offices under government; yet Simplicius does not hesitate to affirm, " that it is really and in good " faith a *sentiment* of our religion, that " it is lawful to deceive our fellow- " creatures by false professions, and at the " same time to call upon the Judge of the " whole earth to witness our sincerity," and therefore he exclaims," what Englishman, " what consistent Protestant, nay, what " *honest infidel*, would wish to see the ma- " nagement of the important interests of " his country consigned into their hands?" —I have thus reviewed the chief arguments which Simplicius has urged against the liberal toleration of our religion. I have not inquired into the correctness of his statements of the oath which, he says, is administered to catholic bishops; but I beg that it may not, from my silence respecting it, be concluded to be authentic. I purpose, if ever you allow me to resume the subject, to compare the oath, even as stated by Simplicius, with that required from graduates in the English universities, which he will find equally " pregnant with the utmost possible " illiberality, absurdity, and cruelty." The accusations hitherto brought against the catholic religion by several of your correspondents (and I am sorry to add, by yourself,) are desultory and vague. If, however, it can be pointed out in what particulars the tenets professed by Catholics are so " dissonant to " the principles of humanity and social or- " der," that it would be improper or impolitic to tolerate their religion, I engage myself, unless a more able advocate steps forward, to repel, without duplicity or sophistry, every part of the charge, for I would not adhere to opinions which I could not vindicate.—A. B. *Hampstead April 23*, 1807.

" LEARNED LANGUAGES."

No. 22.

Sir,——You are a man of little ceremony yourself; it will, therefore, be unnecessary to attempt an apology for addressing you with that sort of freedom, which may be thought to display more sincerity than politeness.—Chance threw in my way your number of the 28th of March, where I saw part of the discussion, which you invite the public to canvass through the medium of your Register, on the utility of the Learned Languages as forming a branch of education.—Your friend the Arch Perriwig of Mauclin (No. 13) and his worthy coadjutor the sage Attalus, of Liverpool, (No. 16) have both demonstrated this truth; that neither the acquisition of a certain number of Latin *vocables*, nor even a University education (if indeed, the gentleman be a son of Rhedycina) have the power of communicating good sense, or the faculty of good writing to those pericrania, on which nature had originally affixed the stamp of dunce. The question, nevertheless, appears to me to lie in a small compass. Classical learning is certainly of no use to the mechanic or the shopkeeper, or to any of that numerous class of mankind whose lot it is to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. To the gentleman, how-

ever, it is an ornamental accomplishment, and a source of refined pleasure. To the man of literature who writes for the instruction or the amusement of the public, to the orator of the senate, the pulpit or the bar, it is more: the study of these relics of ancient elegance is an indispensable requisite, if they hope to shine in their several pursuits. A mind tinctured at an early period with these studies receives a flavour, if I may borrow an idea from a Roman poet, which is diffused over all its extemporaneous effusions or elaborate compositions; and this we seek in vain in the productions of mere mother-wit. Translations—but who is to translate if nobody learns—may give somewhat of the sentiment of an ancient author; but the spirit of the expression will in general be lost; and without this no sympathetic fire will be kindled in the bosom of the reader. A cast of plaister of Paris, or an ordinary engraving may convey some idea of the Apollo, or of the Laocoon, or the wonders of Raphael's pencil, or the enchanting scenes of Claude; but the artist desires to view and to feel the graces of the inimitable originals. My argument is not shaken by adducing instances of the powers of uncommon genius without the aid of classical education. We look with admiration on the creative fancy of Shakespeare, that great master of the passions, and we listen with delight to the wild wood-notes of Burns; but, at the same time, we are not blind to the faults of the bard of Avon or of Ayr. Had they possessed superior advantages, the world might have enjoyed from their extraordinary talents, works of more perfect excellence. The irony of your Maudlin correspondent was not required to convince us that all the Christian virtues may be practised by a man without any learning at all; and it may be granted perhaps, that a plain country congregation may be well instructed by a pastor without these acquirements; but, as it is the privilege of religion to "raise her mitred front in palaces," as well as to visit the humble dwellings of the poor; as men of education have not in this country yet left off frequenting places of public worship; it is desirable that those persons who are appointed to inculcate the moral duties and religious precepts, should have gained that polish of mind—that their discourse should attract hearers of the superior orders, and keep up their attention by making "Truths divine "come mended from their tongue."—As I wish to avoid prolixity, I will only hint at one other use of the dead languages. By the common consent of Europe, Latin is the vehicle of that information which public inscriptions are intended to convey to the natives of different countries and distant ages; if the language of the Romans ceased to be cultivated, these monuments would soon be as useless as the Egyptian hieroglyphics are to us at this day.——After all, whatever is said on this side the question, Sir, is but waste of words. Self-applauding ignorance can no more comprehend the advantages derived from learning, than a man born blind can understand the theory of colours. Every circle of pot-house politicians, will doubtless, with one voice give the victory to the gigantic champion of the Vandals; and, probably, in the still less sophisticated symposia of a night-cellar, you might hear these doctrines carried still farther, and the opinions of those active reformers, Messrs. Tiler, Straw, &c. who proscribed writing and reading altogether, might there be voted by acclamation. That some species of oratory, and a certain style of writing may flourish, without the aid of previously studying ancient authors, I am ready to admit. The flowers of rhetoric of Billingsgate and St. Giles's, would probably acquire no new strength from an acquaintance with the energetic eloquence of Demosthenes, or the flowing periods of Cicero. A political writer too, of strong natural parts, however coarse his style, may excite and retain the attention of the public, unindebted to the stores of antiquity, if he takes care to season his olio with a due quantity of scurrility and abuse. Your predecessor Junius, who like you assumed the office of censor and chastiser of men high in office, knew the value of those ornamental acquirements, which you affect to despise. His labours full of venom as they are, will be preserved as models of composition, as long as the English language subsists, whilst yours will be speedily consigned to the trunk maker and the pastry cook. Still, however, your exertions are not useless. We are at least satisfied by your publications, that we enjoy the inestimable blessing of a free press; and it is possible that the dread of your knout may check improper conduct in great men, as the lash and the cord of the executioner are the means of preventing crimes among the lower orders of mankind. Proceed then in your course; but let me warn you to confine yourself to your vocation. Believe me, the direction of the taste of a nation is a business quite out of your sphere; the public will not attend to your strictures on classical learning, with more patience than they would listen to lectures on the fine arts delivered *ex cathedrâ* by Professor Ketch from th New-drop in the Old Bailey.——I am, Sir &c.——OUDEIS.—*Oxford, April* 12, 1807.

"LEARNED LANGUAGES."

No. 23.

SIR,——I have already written you two long letters upon the subject of the "Learned Languages," and certainly did not intend to write another. I had ranged myself upon your side of the question, because I thought it the right one; I declared my sentiments fully, because I disdain equivocation. But, in your last Register, there has appeared a letter, pretending to correct an error in my statements; and to this letter I wish to make a reply; not for its intrinsic merit, that is indeed too humble, but because I am unwilling that I should stand charged of incorrectness in such a blundering way. I write indeed under a fictitious name; there are, however, those who know my signature, and who will look for some vindication of myself. I, therefore, confess that I more earnestly wish the insertion of this letter, than of either of the other two; and I feel confident that you will not deny me the means of clearing myself through the same channel by which I have been daubed.—— Your correspondent's letter (who signs himself G. N. Leith, April 4, 1807), is a blunder from beginning to end, and could have been written only from native obtundity of intellect, or from a mean desire to cavil without truth or sense upon his side. The primary object of his letter is to tell me, that in the fourteenth century, Livy, and other Roman writers were known to Dante, Petrarca, and Boccacio. For this purpose he quotes Gibbon, to shew that Petrarca acquired the spirit of a Roman citizen from the writings of the Romans. But, where was the necessity of all this? Whom was it to correct? Whom to instruct? Surely not me? If this G. N. had any such intentions, I can only beg him and your readers to peruse the following lines from my letter, No. 16, p. 509. "At that time" (i. e. the age of Dante, Petrarca, and Boccacio) "there were "few manuscripts yet discovered, and those "few difficult of attainment: Sallust, Livy, "some of the works of Cicero and a "few of the poets." And yet this sagacious Scotsman comes to correct me, and tell *me* just what I had before told *him!* Pretending that I was ignorant of all this, he sits down to write a rude letter acquainting me with the very facts which I myself had brought forward, and surely could not be ignorant of. As to his illiberal and ungentlemanly insinuation, that I had quoted De Sade without reading him, the only disgrace it reflects is upon the person who departs so far from candour and good breeding as to make it.—It needs no further arguments to show, that this G. N. has blundered most contemptibly upon my letter; but I will take this opportunity to say a few words upon the knowledge this triumvirate possessed of Greek, and its revival in the West; for your correspondent also says a passing word upon that. I exclude Dante altogether, for it is true, almost to demonstration, that he knew nothing of Greek; and Petrarch knew so little of it, that when his friend Nicolaus Sigerus made him a present of the poems of Homer, he acknowledged in his letter of thanks, that it was indeed valuable, but it would have been more so had it been attended by a person who could *explain* it to him, and conduct him through the labyrinths of the Greek language; for want of which, he adds, Homer was dumb to him, or, rather, he was deaf to Homer. *(See Mem. of the House of Medici, by Sir Richard Clayton, Vol I. p.* 141. *Gibbon, Vol. VI. p.* 420. *Godwin's Life of Chaucer, Vol. I. p.* 267.) Petrarch's first Greek instructor, Barlaam, died early, and he was so disgusted with the uncouth manners of Leontius Pilatus, the friend of Boccacio, that he made little progress under him. Sir Richard Clayton says, (N. 140) that Petrarca and Boccacio "had tasted imperfectly some Attic treats," but allows Boccacio to have had the most Greek of the two. He unequivocally assigns the æra of the revival of the Greek language in the West to the age of Cosmo de' Medici and the Council of Florence. Ib. 143. Gibbon places it a little earlier (vi. 423); and Roscoe in his Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, says, (Vol. I p. 33) that it was not until the beginning of the fifteenth century that the ancient MSS. began to be sought for. This elegant historian remarks also, (p. 43) that in 1423 Aurispa arrived at Venice with 238 MSS. among which were the works of Plato, Proclus, Plotinus, Lucian, Xenophon, the histories of Arrian, Dio, and of Diodorus Siculus, the geography of Strabo, the poems of Callimachus, of Pindar, of Oppian and those attributed to Orpheus; and that the first Greek Academy was founded at Florence, towards the close of the fifteenth century by Lorenzo de' Medici. (Vol. II. p. 104.) From these facts, therefore, I am borne out in my reasonings which this G. N. so petulantly would overthrow. But there is another circumstance mentioned by De Sade (Mémoires pour servir, &c. Vol. III. p. 627) which strengthens incontestably the tenor of my argument. Boccacio wrote a Latin * letter to Petrarca in 1360, under

* Observe that this letter was not in Greek, but Latin; a tacit confession that

the name of Homer, in which that poet is made to complain of the various indignities he has suffered; such as the ingratitude of his imitator Virgil, who has not even mentioned him, &c.; and among others, he complains that Leontius Pilatus has dragged him to Florence, where he is in a manner exiled, having found only *three* friends, and he begs Petrarca to take him under his protection. Petrarca in his answers consoles him for his different chagrins, and says, it is not astonishing he should find only *three* friends in a commercial town like Florence; but, he adds, inquire well, and you will find a *fourth*. His biographer says in a note, "le quatrième est *peut-etre* Petrarque."—He makes it merely a supposition, and he says besides, that the *three* were Boccacio, the prior of the Holy Apostles, and Collucio Salutati, *si je ne me trompe* or Francis Bruni (Ib. 628); and to this I may add that, at the very æra of this triumvirate; and afterwards the Greek language was so utterly uncultivated that it became a proverb in the lectures of the professors: "Græcum est, non potest legi," were their words when they came to a Greek passage, and passing it over, went on with the Latin text.——I am, therefore, warranted in maintaining the assertion, that the knowledge of the ancient languages has *no effect* upon the efforts of native genius; the other points of their *inutility* I have already discussed, and here, for my own part, I take leave of the controversy. I could not permit such an egregious blunder as the whole of G. N.'s letter is to pass unnoticed, when he so grossly charges me with oversights which the most careless perusal of my letter would have shewn was false; and, perhaps, (though I am not ambitious of it) I have convinced him that Dante and Petrarch were *no* Greek scholars; and, that Boccacio was but an indifferent one. Again hoping that you will do me the justice to insert this letter, I remain. &c.—ATTALUS.——*Liverpool, April* 13, 1807.

" LEARNED LANGUAGES."

No. 24.

SIR,——For the first time in my life, I have dared the task to address a public man; perhaps, justly you may conceive, that as I am placed here, it is for other purposes than to interfere in the bustle of politics, inexperienced as my years, and especially my talents must have made me; yet I cannot forbear to tell you, that these two years past I had been a constant reader of your Register. I had admired it, I had endeavoured to frame my sentiments to abide by it, for this plainest of reasons, that I had beheld in yours alone, of the public papers of the day, the most correct, the most pure understanding of that happy constitution, under which I boast my birth. I had never viewed you crouch to the prostituted frown of power. I had seen you stand forth the defender of oppressed virtue, and of patriotism; and my young heart has glowed with the desire of some future period, when I might publicly and practically glory in imitating, and in enjoining, the precepts you will have left behind, when the concerns of this life shall no longer have their weight, and returned to the dust, whence you sprung, point another instance to mankind of the visionary pursuits of this life.—With these emotions, and I sacredly assure you, I felt them even to enthusiasm, judge my chagrin, when at length I fancied I beheld you condeseend to the weakness of party rancour. God grant I might be mistaken. I would wish to look to you as the glorious palladium of *real* liberty. I have witnessed your talents, and I have believed your integrity, and had it not been for your language in the paper of this day, April 11, I would have waited longer to have considered the bias of your mind; but, I am now determined, and I proceed, indeed, with diffidence, to remonstrate with you on the inferiority of your late papers contrasted with those of some months past. —Your Register was *truly* denominated *Political*, it was made precious by its subject matter being always guided by moderation and argument; directed only to those, whose corrupted principles, or prejudiced errors merited the chastisement of a prudent reviser, or whose exalted conduct demanded the approbation of ripe ability.—While the hireling papers of the day were burning with the officious hatred of party, and maintained the principles of the ins and outs, only for the base motives of interest, we beheld in you the consideration of either side balanced justly, rejected and protected equally by the firmness of a man of honour. You gathered *exactly* each State Paper that might be an object of consequence; and in your paper we beheld, unimpaired, the French Bulletins, as they officially arrived, which will be a subject of great curiosity to posterity.—— During the late Westminster election, I had been told, you were the hireling of Horne Tooke; I disbelieved it. I thought you too firm a man. I regretted the abuse, which I sometimes saw in your paper, for although each print equally displayed it, and in the hurry of an election had been allowed to be

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neither of them knew much of the former language.

pardonable, yet I had expected Mr. Cobbett, whose moderation had hitherto been unexampled, and whose principles, hitherto impartial, would not have condescended to stain his pages with the language of low life. At length that was dropped. Alas! it was succeeded by the bombastic rhodomontade of school craft, and your *Political* Register became the receptacle of each unmeaning and ridiculous effusion that issued from the pen of any pedant, who attempted a vindication of your attack on what you please to call the "Learned Languages;" an attack I was sorry to see you had started, for no one purpose, but to afford your enemies *contempt* for your ignorance, and your friends, regret for your intemperance. Those pages that had supplied fresh matter to the fertility of statesmen, that would have enriched the minds of many of the younger members of either House, by leading them to consider truth, unbiassed and impartial; those pages, I say, instead of being filled with a political harvest, are, I am sorry to say, obliged to contain such nonsense, that would have *even* disgraced Redhead Yorke's opposition Register; and this merely to gratify a private pique. We are to be told in the mean time, that you intend to continue the contest, and on that account, are sorry that you cannot keep pace with the Bulletins and State Papers, but must delay the insertion; they indeed, which complete the most excellent part of your performance. But all this trash, Mr. Cobbett, is excuseable to your Register of this day, wherein you attack the principles of the hireling editors of the press, and entirely exclude the noble science which once dignified your paper. What are Mr. Perry, Mr. Heriot, Mr. Walter, or Mr. Bowles to you? Leave them to the contempt of the country, which, if they deserve, they will sooner or later meet; appear not to be guided, as they, you say, are, by the wish to sacrifice your country to their own interest and their own paltry disputes; for, I regret to say it, but the being so particular to state the failings of another, hastens the inquiry home to yourself, and I begin to fear, that the mind of Mr. Cobbett is not unstained, as it formerly was. However, it is not too late, as yet you have the wish, with most reflecting men, to be correct, they see in you that ability which rightly directed will still protect our tottering country. Retain it, nor lose that character which of all others is most dignified; the man who stoops to nothing mean, and is actuated only by the noble feelings of honour. Think not you will demean yourself by discontinuing the contest; they who read you with the wish to improve, will rejoice. Pardon me while I stedfastly thus step forth to remonstrate with you. With no one of your readers do you stand higher in the estimation than myself, and while I endeavour to point out your mistake, regard my words with no impatience, but rather with indulgence.—Your endeavouring to attack the languages is weak, because you have not the ability to support it. The Almighty distributes his gifts in various ways; with one branch of science he has liberally and graciously endowed you; aspire not farther; your education, your habits of life, are in opposition to your attempt at persuading mankind you have the ability to turn the noblest remnants of antiquity into ridicule. I fear, that if you continue, you will sink into contemptuous oblivion. Resume your former rank in the consideration of your fellow-countrymen, and while your pages again display the native genius, and ardour of a Briton, scorn in silence the base-born motives of your adversaries who are shackled by the threats of party and the lust of gold. Reflect what joy, what gratitude awaits you from your drooping country, if you again start its defender from the oppression it daily endures; throw not away the time in frivolous, in puerile disputing, when rightly employed you may contribute to save your country ransacked as it is by internal division; rouse yourself from this abusive inactivity, dare the glorious task that once illumined your pages, and become again the champion of England's constitution, worded as it was by our ancestors, and for the continuance of which I devoutly and heartily pray.——I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,—TYRO-OXONIENSIS.——*Oxford.*

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPER.

CAPTURE OF CURACOA.——*From the London Gazette Extraordinary Sunday, Feb. 22, 1807.*

Admiralty Office, Feb. 20.——Captain Lydiard, of his Majesty's ship the Anson, arrived here this morning, with dispatches from vice-admiral Dacres, commander in chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels at Jamaica, to W. Marsden, Esq. of which the following are copies:

Shark, Port Royal, Jan. 11, 1807.—Sir, I have much satisfaction in congratulating my lords commissioners of the Admiralty on the capture of the island of Curacoa, on new year's day in the morning, by the 4 frigates named in the margin * under the orders of capt. Brisbane, of the Arethusa; a copy of whose letter I inclose.——Whilst I contemplate the immense strength of the harbour of Amsterdam, and the superior

* Arethusa, Latona, Anson, and Fisgard.

force contained in its different batteries opposed to the entrance of the frigates, I know not how sufficiently to admire the decision of capt Brisbane in attempting the harbour, and the determined bravery and conduct displayed by himself, the other 3 captains, and all the officers and men under his command; and is another strong instance of the cool and determined bravery of British seamen. ——Capt. Brisbane being from his situation obliged to act as governor, I have, as an acknowledgment and high approbation of his conduct, continued him in that situation till his majesty's pleasure shall be known; and request, in the strongest manner, that their lordships will be pleased to recommend him for that appointment.—Capt. Lydiard, who will have the honour of delivering this, and who fully partook of the conquest, and has before distinguished himself off the Havannah, I beg to refer their lordships to for any information. I shall put an acting captain into the Anson until his return, or I receive directions thereon.——I am, &c.——J. R. Dacres.

His Majesty's ship Arethusa, Curacoa, Jan. 1, 1807.——Sir,—It is with the most lively and heartfelt satisfaction I have the honour to inform you, that his majesty's squadron under my command has this day opened the new year with what I humbly flatter myself will be deemed an enterprize of considerable consequence to my country. —I proceeded in the execution of your orders of the 29th of Nov. with every possible avidity, but the adverse wind and current prevented me from reaching this island before the 1st instant. In my way up I met Capt. Bolton, of the Fisgard, going to Jamaica; I took him under my orders, according to your directions, and proceeded with the squadron off this port, having previously resolved on that system of attack which British seamen are so capable of executing. My arrangement having been previously made known to the respective captains, I was satisfied nothing further remained for me than to put it in execution. My line of battle consisted of the Arethusa, Latona, Anson, and Fisgard; and very soon after the break of day, I made all possible sail with the ships in close order of battle, passing the whole extensive line of sea batteries, and anchored the squadron in a stile far surpassing my expectations. Being still desirous of having the effusion of human blood spared, I wrote the inclosed, No. 1, on the capstan of his majesty's ship Arethusa during the action, which was not regarded, as they did their utmost to destroy us. Words cannot express the ability of the squadron. The harbour was defended by regular fortifications of two tier of guns; Fort Amsterdam alone consisting of 62 pièces of cannon; the entrance only 50 yards wide, athwart which was the Dutch frigate Hatslar, of 36 guns, and Surinam, of 22, with two large schooners of war, one commanded by a Dutch commander; a chain of forts was on Miselburg commanding height; and that almost impregnable fortress, Fort Républiqué, within the distance of grape-shot, enfilading the whole harbour.—At a quarter past 6 we entered the port; a severe and destructive cannonade ensued; the frigate, sloop, and schooners, were carried by boarding; the lower forts, the citadel and town of Amsterdam, by storm; all of which, by 7, were in our possession. For humanity's sake I granted the annexed capitulation; and at 10, the British flag was hoisted on Fort Republique: the whole island is in our quiet possession. The strength, commerce, and value, I understand, are immense. It is now become a pleasing part of my duty, although impossible to do justice to the merits, gallantry, and determination of captains Wood, Lydiard, and Bolton, who so nobly headed their respective ships' companies to the storm; and the same gallantry and determination are due to the officers, seamen, and marines, for following up so glorious an example. Inclosed is a list of the killed and wounded in his majesty's squadron. I have not yet been able to ascertain that of the enemy, except those in the ships. The Dutch commodore was killed early in the action, and the captain of the Surinam severely wounded. I have appointed, by Proclamation, Wednesday next, for the inhabitants, which amount to 30,000, to take the Oath of Allegiance to our most gracious Sovereign; those that do not choose, will be instantly embarked as prisoners of war. For any farther particulars I must beg to refer you to that gallant officer, Captain Lydiard.——I have the honour to be, &c.——Charles Brisbane.

No. I.—His Majesty's ship Arethusa, Curacoa Harbour, Jan. 1, 1807.——Sir,—The British squadron are here to protect, and not to conquer you; to preserve to you your lives, liberty, and property. If a shot is fired at one of my squadron after this summons, I shall immediately storm your batteries. You have five minutes to accede to this determination.—I have the honour to be, &c.—C. Brisbane.—To his Excellency the Governor of Curacoa. [*To be continued.*]

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